



January 6, 2020

The Honorable Alexandra Dapolito Dunn
Assistant Administrator
Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention
Environmental Protection Agency
1201 Constitution Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20460

Re: Docket ID: EPA–HQ–OPPT–2019–0530, *Significant New Use Rules on Certain Chemical Substances (19-5.F)*

Dear Assistant Administrator Dunn,

The Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies (AMWA) is an organization representing the largest publicly owned drinking water utilities in the United States. Pollution prevention is paramount in protecting water sources for public water supply. For this reason, AMWA feels it is imperative to emphasize the importance of protecting drinking water sources through programs like the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA). These programs are the first line of defense against the growing number of contaminants that could pose a risk to drinking water supplies and the public.

Our ability to test for chemicals in our environment has grown exponentially, and we are now aware of the persistent, bioaccumulative, and possible toxic characteristics of chemicals we once thought inert or non-problematic. The most recent and dramatic examples of this are the complex issues surrounding per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). These chemicals have been used for decades, but as our knowledge of these substances has grown, PFAS have been shown to be increasingly problematic. PFAS have highlighted the overwhelming need to better evaluate chemicals before allowing them to be used in commerce in order to prevent chemicals that may pose health risks from entering the environment and contaminating source waters.

Preventing pollutants from entering drinking water supply sources is a complex task. It is easier, more effective and more equitable to control pollutants at the source, where they are highly concentrated, than it is to remove them at the consumer’s expense after they have entered a water body or supply source. Controlling pollutants at the source – in this case at the point of manufacture, import or process – also helps ensure that those who pollute our natural resources are not allowed to pass the cost of correcting the problem onto others.

AMWA has concerns with some of the substances listed in the latest Significant New Use Rule (SNUR) (84 *FR* 66855) and have expanded on these concerns below.

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PMN Number(s): P-17-0393

Chemical Name(s): Alkanediamine, dialkyl-, polymer with a-hydro-w-[(1-oxo-2-propen-1-yl)oxy]poly(oxy-1,2-ethanediyl) ether with substituted alkyl-substitutedalkanediol, reaction products with alkyl-alkanamine (generic)

Within the notice, EPA concludes that based on the absence of sufficient information to permit a reasoned evaluation, “the substances may present an unreasonable risk to human health or the environment.” The agency goes on to predict toxicity to aquatic organisms at concentrations above 1 part per billion (ppb). To address these concerns, EPA requires that there be no releases to surface waters that would exceed 1 ppb.

AMWA is extremely concerned by EPA’s determination that this chemical may be released to surface waters at a level which appears to have limited scientific basis. Although some data has been apparently submitted supporting 1 ppb, as mentioned above the agency determined that it is lacking sufficient information to make an evaluation. AMWA requests that EPA further explain the reasoning behind this determination and if there is additional empirical support for this determination, AMWA requests that EPA make such information readily available.

Although the information within the docket shows wastewater removal to be high at 90% and migration to groundwater to be negligible, AMWA cautions against allowing for releases of this chemical into surface waters due to possible unforeseen risks in the future. Surface waters are often the source waters for drinking water utilities. Therefore, any allowance of chemical discharges to these waters should be made with this in mind, using scientifically sound data that is made readily available to the public for review and comment.

PMN Number(s): P-19-0097; P-19-0100; P-19-0108; P-19-0110

Chemical Name(s): Halogenated alkylbenzoic acid, ethyl ester (generic)

Within the notice, EPA concludes that based on the absence of sufficient information to permit a reasoned evaluation, “the substances may present an unreasonable risk to human health or the environment.” The agency goes on to identify concerns for “neurotoxicity, irritation to skin, eyes, lungs, and mucous membranes, developmental toxicity, kidney toxicity and aquatic toxicity.” To address all of these concerns, EPA requires that there be no releases to surface waters that would exceed 14 ppb.

AMWA is extremely concerned by EPA’s determination that these chemicals may be released to surface waters at a level which appears to have limited scientific basis. Although some data has been apparently submitted supporting 14 ppb, as mentioned above the agency determined that it is lacking sufficient information to make an evaluation. AMWA requests that EPA further explain the reasoning behind this determination and if there is additional empirical support for this determination, AMWA requests that EPA make such information readily available.

The information included in the docket states that migration of these chemicals to groundwater is expected to be rapid. As groundwater may be used as a source for drinking water, EPA should be especially cautious with chemicals that have this particular attribute. Even more concerning is the fact that removal of these substances during wastewater treatment is expected to be between 0-25%. AMWA is concerned with the allowance of this chemical into surface waters when there is information stating that removal from wastewater will be so difficult.

AMWA cautions against allowing for releases of this chemical into surface waters due to possible unforeseen risks in the future. Surface waters are often the source waters for drinking water utilities. Therefore, any allowance of chemical discharges to these waters should be made with this in mind, using scientifically sound data that is made readily available to the public for review and comment.

Comments Related to the Process as a Whole

For future SNURs, AMWA recommends that EPA reconsider approvals for chemicals that are known to have an acute toxicity to human health and have been identified as a potential contaminant of concern in drinking water supplies. The Office of Pollution Prevention and Toxics (OPPT) should coordinate with the EPA Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water (OGWDW), which not only oversees the Safe Drinking Water Act implementation but also may have on its radar many of the chemicals being considered in this and future SNURs as potential drinking water contaminants. Furthermore, AMWA strongly encourages OPPT to utilize the knowledge base of the drinking water program at EPA's OGWDW to better inform decision making for future SNURs.

AMWA also recommends that EPA include the agency's PMN determination for each chemical included in future SNURs. It is necessary for the public to have access to these decision documents so that they might better understand the reasoning for EPA's decision and provide the most useful and appropriate information. AMWA also requests that EPA clearly mark these documents within the docket. Currently, these documents are often not included or are not clearly marked forcing the public to parse through dozens, if not hundreds, of supporting documents included within the docket in order to find them. Dealing with this volume of documents is a cumbersome task and undermines the intent of the comment period by impeding the public's access to information necessary to provide the agency with meaningful comments.

AMWA appreciates the agency's application of searchable tables for both PMNs and Significant New Use Notices, as well as for chemicals determined not likely to present an unreasonable risk following PMN review. AMWA requests that the location of the PMNs and Significant New Use Notices table be made more apparent and easily accessible off the main SNURs webpage, similar to the table for chemicals determined not likely to present an unreasonable risk following PMN review. Currently this table is very difficult to locate without knowing the direct link.

AMWA is also concerned with EPA's method of obtaining "Potentially Useful Information". The agency states that the orders do not require testing to help determine potential health and/or environmental effects. The only incentive for manufacturers or users of these chemicals to obtain and submit this information is so

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that a modification or revoking of the PMN would be allowed. This approach provides a disincentive for additional study that could reveal more harmful health effects since disclosure of new information to the agency could prompt further investigation by EPA. Additional study would likely not remove the PMN and could possibly result in more federal restrictions on the chemical.

TSCA provides significant tools to help prevent harmful pollution. In addition to TSCA, the agency should consider how our current system of environmental regulation can be leveraged to protect human health and the environment across multiple media. Preventing pollution at the source is a more cost-effective option for protecting public health rather than relying solely on end-of-pipe treatment to ensure safe drinking water. Additional loadings into the environment of minimally studied chemicals, such as the ones identified in this letter, could result in future problems for source water protection and ultimately necessitate additional drinking water treatment at a high cost to the public.

It is crucial to strive towards the prevention of pollutants entering drinking water sources. TSCA provides us with a unique opportunity to protect the environment and public health. AMWA thanks EPA for the opportunity to comment and looks forward to working with the agency to protect drinking water sources in the future.

If you would like to further discuss our concerns, please call Stephanie Hayes Schlea, Director of Regulatory and Scientific Affairs, at 202-331-2820.

Sincerely,



Diane VanDe Hei
Chief Executive Officer

cc: David Ross, Assistant Administrator, OW
Jennifer McLain, OGWDW
Eric Burneson, OGWDW
Kenneth Moss, OPPT